

JULIE. Je serai une perce-neige.

G. M. Et Lucille, quel fleur serez vous.

LUCILLE. Je serai une violette, bonne maman.

G. M. Et le petit Henri, quelle fleur sera-t-il ?

HENRI. Je serez la primevère, bonne maman.

G. M. Bien, et bébé sera le petit ruban bleu pour les lier. Entrez donc, Marie (*she comes in*). J'ai un bouquet de violettes, de primevères, de perce-neige, lié avec un petit ruban bleu. Que ferez vous avec le ruban ?

MARIE. Je le mettrai dans mon livre.

G. M. Que ferez vous avec la perce-neige ?

MARIE. Je la mettrai dans un vase sur la table.

G. M. Que ferez vous avec la violette ?

MARIE. Je la donnerai à une petite fille malade.

G. M. Que ferez vous avec la primevère ?

MARIE. Je la donnerai à Papa pour sa boutonnière.

G. M. Eh, bien, vous mettrez bébé dans votre livre.

CHILDREN. Oh ! le pauvre bébé dans un livre !

G. M. Vous mettrez Julie dans un vase sur la table. Vous donnerez Lucille à une petite fille malade. Et vous donnerez le petit Henri à son Papa pour mettre dans sa boutonnière.

Enter PAPA.

PAPA. C'est bon cela. Encore, encore.

Many other subjects for little plays might be mentioned, such as "Shopping," "Presentation at Court," "Bathing in the Sea," "A Picnic," "A Visit to the Zoo." The chief consideration is that the children should be interested and happy, and that, while adding to their vocabulary, they should never be pressed nor bored. The crowning success will be when the little people know enough to arrange a play all by themselves, subject, characters, costumes, dialogue and all, all secret even from "mother," who, not needed as actor on this occasion, can go and double the "audience" !

BOOKS.

"En hoexkens ende boexkens."

Do all our readers know the invaluable series of little books issued the Religious Tract Society under the title of "By-paths of Bible Knowledge" ? (2s. 6d. and 3s. a volume). The *raison d'être* of the series is well shown in Professor Sayce's preface to one of the volumes, his "Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments." "Discovery after discovery," he says, "has been pouring in upon us from Oriental lands, and accounts given only ten years ago of the results of Oriental research are already beginning to be antiquated. It is useful, therefore, to take stock of our present knowledge, and to see how far it bears on that 'Old Story' which has been familiar to us from our childhood. The same spirit of scepticism which had rejected the early legends of Greece and Rome had laid its hand also on the Old Testament, and had determined that the sacred histories themselves were but a collection of myths and fables. But, suddenly, as with the hand of a magician, the ancient eastern world has been reawakened to life by the spade of the explorer and the patient skill of the decipherer ; and we now find ourselves in the presence of monuments which bear the names and recount the deeds of the heroes of Scripture."

In the preface to a second volume which he has contributed to the series, "Assyria, its Princes and People," Professor Sayce goes on to say, "Before the cuneiform monuments were interpreted no one could have suspected that they would have poured such a flood of light upon Old Testament history. This light is manifold ; the very language of the inscriptions has helped to explain difficult passages in the Hebrew Bible. . . . No one can read the sketch of Assyrian history, as revealed by the monuments, which is given in the following pages, without perceiving how important it is for the understanding of the ancient Scriptures. . . . The chapter in which Isaiah describes the onward march of the Assyrian host against Jerusalem (chap. x.) is no 'ideal' description of an 'ideal campaign' ; the verses in which he tells of the sufferings endured by the beleaguered inhabitants of the Jewish capital (chap. xxii.) are no exaggerated accounts of a possible catastrophe ; the prophecies in which he declares that the devoted city was about to fall into the hands of its enemies (chap. x. 34, xxii. 14), were not unfulfilled threats." It is hardly too much to say that no one is justified, in these days, in teaching Bible history to children without pressing into service the strong confirmation, the marvellous elucidation, and the surpassing interest of the discoveries made during the last few years by Oriental archaeologists. Those of us whose childish thoughts were influenced by Layard's "Nineveh"—a large and costly volume, mostly borrowed for family reading—appreciate

with thankfulness the fact that, in regard to books, times have changed. We no longer have to wait a few years until the big book by the great discoverer, which only a few people could afford to buy, should have filtered into the little book by the second-rate person, before we can possess ourselves of a handy volume up to date for daily use in preparing our children's lessons. Here we have the most fascinating records at first hand, the results of the latest research, written, when not by the actual explorers themselves (as most of the volumes are), at any rate, by eminent archæologists who have stayed at home and watched their labours; and this at a price so low as to be within every one's reach. We cannot urge too strongly upon parents the duty of letting their children's knowledge of Bible history be illustrated from the very first by the light of contemporary records.

Some other volumes of the series are:—

"Dwellers on the Nile" (Ancient Egyptians), by E. A. Wallis Budge, M.A. "Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill," by the Rev. James King, M.A. "Babylonian Life and History," by E. A. Wallis Budge, M.A. "Galilee in the Time of Christ," by S. Merrill, D.D., &c.

"Echoes of Two Little Voices," by G. M. S. (Hodder and Stoughton.) This is a very touching record of two young lives in the same family, each cut short by early death under very pathetic circumstances. The little book will touch the sympathies of any mother who reads it, for it is written with the simple eloquence which speaks straight from heart to heart. These children belonged to a happy home, where the gentle rule was based on the laws of the kingdom of heaven, and one feels how easily the young lives that dwelt in such an atmosphere would pass insensibly, without any wrench, any sense of great contrast perhaps, into the larger life of the heavenly home. If of such is the kingdom of heaven, *they*, at any rate, will feel themselves at home among its unguessed realities; it is *we* who have to murmur to ourselves as we try to image forth the unseen, those "pathetic negatives," as they have been called, of the Book of Revelation—no night there, no tears, no sorrow nor sighing—all things become new! These children were perfectly simple and natural in their early piety. There was no gloom nor austerity in their lives, but mingling with the opening wonder of their young minds, their eager interest in their pursuits and pleasures, they felt, in the quaint words of the poet Vaughan,

"Through all this earthly dresse
Bright shoots of everlastingness."—M. E. P.

"A First Poetry Book," "A Second Poetry Book," "A Third Poetry Book." Compiled by Miss M. A. Woods, Head Mistress of the Clifton High School for Girls. (Macmillan and Co.) Our first feeling in turning over the pages of these "Poetry Books" is—envy! What delightful wanderings over the wide fields of English poetry do they represent!

and "What time the gray-fly winds his sultry horn,"

"Till the star that rose at evening, bright,
Toward Heav'n's descent had slop'd his westerling wheel,"
a poet walks among the poets' pleasaunces, culling a windflower here, and there a daffodilly. It is possible that Miss Woods does not write verses, but

do not the exquisite taste and insight with which she has chosen and arranged these nosegays of verse evidence poetic power of a high order? We should not have said "arranged," the veritable vagrant in poetic fields need have no terrors here. You turn over the pages, and chance on Herrick, Blake, Browning, Vaughan, Burns, put where they are for no other reason than that the compiler loved to have it so; and this poetic "licence" is very welcome to the reader who is tired of being instructed, and longs for one place in the world where wild flowers grow. The "First Book" is for children of from seven to ten or eleven. Here are the best of the old favourites, and much that is new. We are glad to see William Blake recognised as the true children's poet that he is. The "Second Book" is intended for "from eleven to thirteen," and one hopes to be always under thirteen in the power of finding here "a handful of pleasant delights." The "Third Book" is dedicated to "My Sixth Form." "I have made such a selection as pleased myself," says Miss Woods, and perhaps it is the sense of sympathetic companionship which helps to make these three "Poetry Books" delightful reading. Children allowed to browse at will here must needs acquire the "poetic sense," most "happy-making" of all intellectual gifts. May we utter one word of protest—the dissipation of flitting from chalice to chalice should only be an occasional treat; should not a single "poet" be the study of a year until he becomes a dear and intimate friend, a guide and teacher in the ways of life? But the poet we mean a child to love should not be studied with a view to any examination.

"Hymns for School Worship." (Macmillan and Co.) Miss Woods has shown as faultless judgment and tact in this collection as in her "Poetry Books," and they are full of chastened devotional feeling. Well as it is adapted for "school worship," we doubt whether this little book is calculated to be as dearly cherished a private possession as any of the other three. The tone of many of the hymns is hardly sympathetic enough for the young heart "athirst for God."

Our readers will be glad to know that at last we have a Magazine for college reading, which should correspond with the *Parents' Review*, for more educated homes. "Onward and Upward" is a quite charming penny monthly magazine, edited by Lady Aberdeen, president of the P.N.E.U. The Secretaries of Branches will be glad to know that the Editor is having a special edition prepared for P.N.E.U. circulation, which is necessary, because "Onward and Upward" was issued in the first place for Lady Aberdeen's "Haddo House Association." Here mothers will find wise counsels as to the bringing up of their families, and the warm loving tone, and the simple, manful Christianity breathed in the publication, must needs have a healthy influence on the home. (Partridge and Co.)